

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 925  
By: Kolkhorst  
Public Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

For a student without proficient reading and comprehension skills, every other school subject can be incredibly difficult. Problematically, many students in Texas are not reading at a satisfactory level. Interested parties report that teacher quality is widely considered the most important school-related variable in improving student performance. Accordingly, the parties contend that a teacher must be afforded the necessary resources, training, and tools relating to student literacy and that the state should provide funding to establish a professional development program similar to a program created by previous reading initiatives in Texas. S.B. 925 seeks to improve opportunities for teacher professional development.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

S.B. 925 amends the Education Code to require the commissioner of education to develop and make available literacy achievement academies for teachers who provide reading instruction to students at the kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, or third-grade level. The bill requires a literacy achievement academy to include training in effective and systematic instructional practices in reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and in the use of empirically validated instructional methods that are appropriate for struggling readers. The bill authorizes a literacy achievement academy to include training in effective instructional practices in writing. The bill requires the commissioner to adopt criteria for selecting teachers who may attend a literacy achievement academy and, in adopting selection criteria, to require granting a priority to teachers employed by a school district at a campus at which 50 percent or more of the students enrolled are educationally disadvantaged and to provide a process through which a teacher not employed at such a campus may attend the academy if the academy has available space and the school district employing the teacher pays the costs of the teacher's attendance. The bill entitles a teacher who attends a literacy achievement academy to receive a stipend in the amount determined by the commissioner from funds appropriated for that purpose. The bill specifies that such a stipend is not considered in determining whether a school district is paying the teacher the required minimum monthly salary. The bill requires regional education service centers, on request of the commissioner, to assist the commissioner and the Texas Education Agency with training and other activities relating to the development and operation of literacy achievement academies. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2027.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.